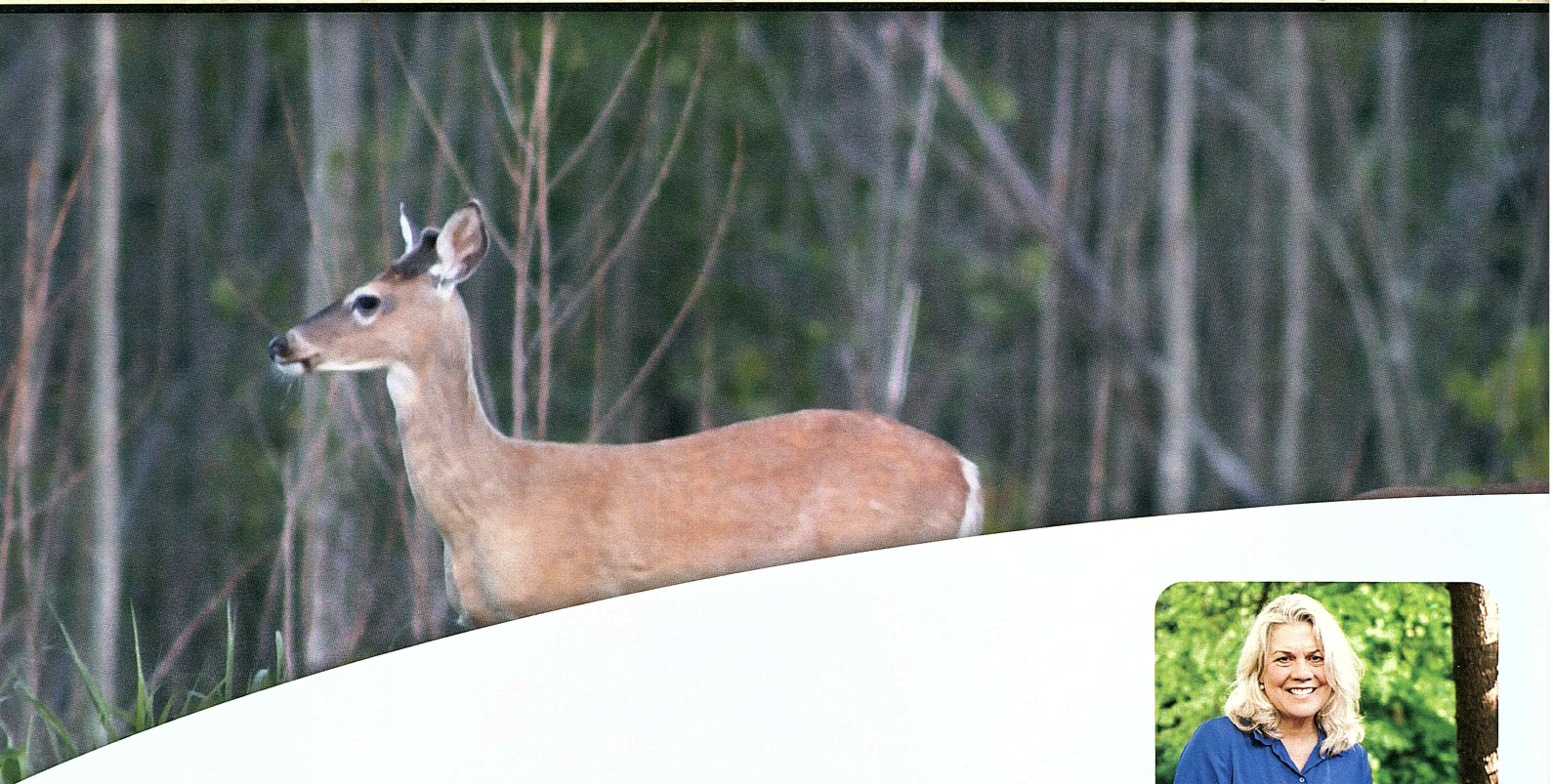


2023-2024

Conservation *Briefing*



Peck Ranch Conservation Area



Letter from the Director

Welcome to the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) 2023-2024 Conservation Briefing.

This edition of the briefing booklet coincides with the 85th anniversary of the creation of MDC and the Missouri Conservation Commission, which oversees the department. This 85-year span has seen the restoration of Missouri's once-depleted fish, forest, and wildlife resources. Once-unchecked hunting, fishing, and logging pushed Missouri's resources to the brink. Today, regulated hunting and fishing recreation and a thriving forest products industry have an economic impact of more than \$15 billion and support more than 102,000 Missouri jobs.

The constitutional amendment that created MDC in 1937 was the result of the hard work of Missouri's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor enthusiasts who recognized the dire state of our natural resources, and that spirit of public support, involvement, and partnership is woven through every MDC success — from the restoration of our white-tailed deer and turkey populations to the return of elk to the Missouri Ozarks. Our greatest assets in protecting our resources are the partners who multiply and magnify every MDC effort — including hunting and fishing organizations, Stream

Teams, birding groups, and more.

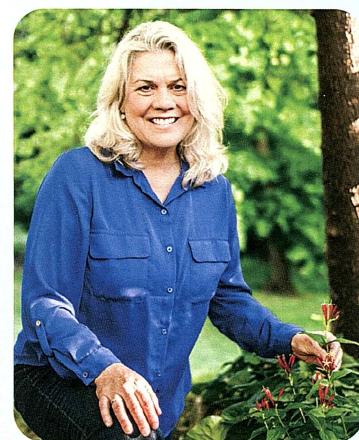
Created to protect Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife, MDC has found in recent years another beneficiary of our efforts — human health. Study after study has confirmed that time in nature has many benefits to human health, a fact that was brought home by the pandemic of 2020-2021. Because of COVID-19, we realized just how important the interconnectedness of human, environmental, and animal health is.

I appreciate your interest in MDC and the role we play in making Missouri a great place to live. I hope the 2023-2024 Conservation Briefing provides you with helpful insights into who we are, what we do, and why conservation is important to all Missourians.

Thank you for your support of conservation in Missouri.

Sincerely,

Sara Parker Pauley
Director



Taylor Lynn Photography

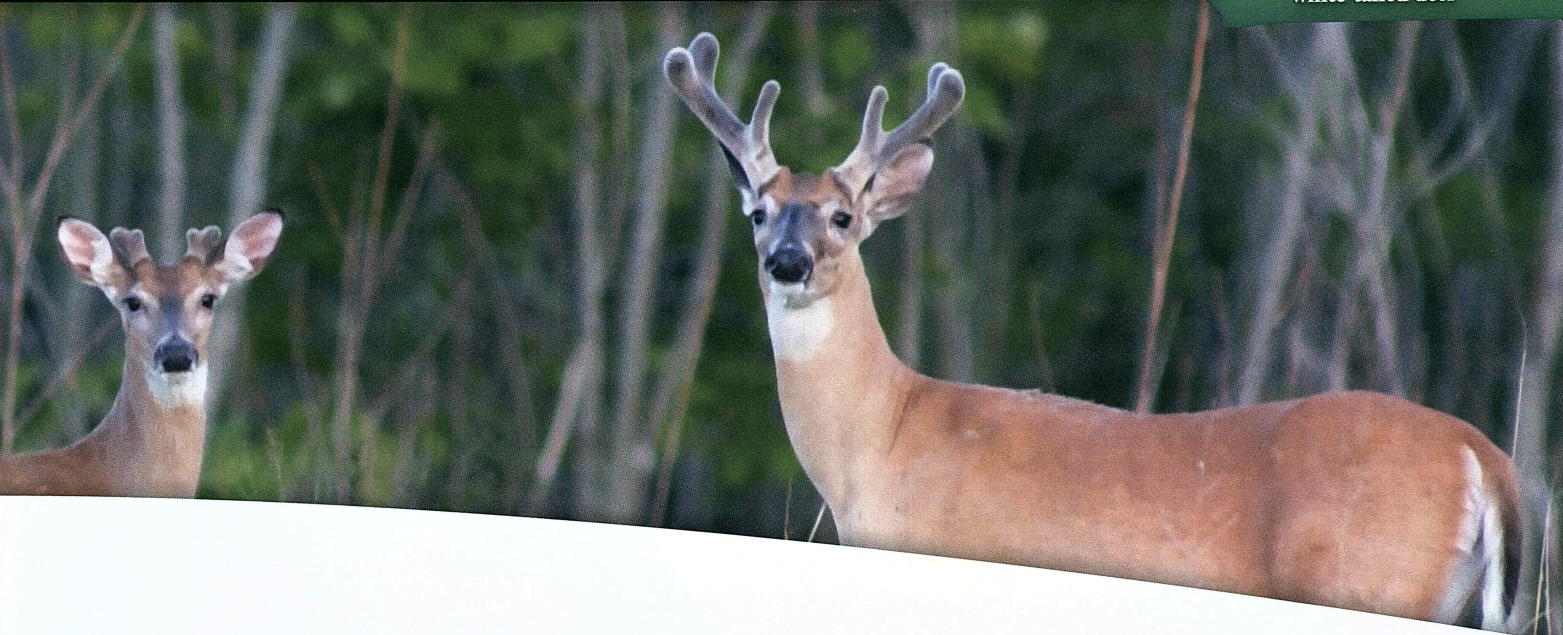


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Who we are. What we do. Why this matters.

Who We Are

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) was conceived at the low point of U.S. conservation history, when unregulated hunting, fishing, and trapping, and the abuse of forests, had depleted the state's natural resources. First envisioned by Missouri sportsmen and conservationists, MDC was created by a constitutional amendment in 1937 as the world's first apolitical, science-based, conservation agency, with exclusive authority over fish, forests, and wildlife.

The four-member Missouri Conservation Commission approves the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*, as well as MDC's policies, long-term strategic planning, budget, and major expenditures. Commission members, who are appointed by the governor, serve staggered, unpaid, six-year terms.

What We Do

MDC protects and manages the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state and provides opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources.

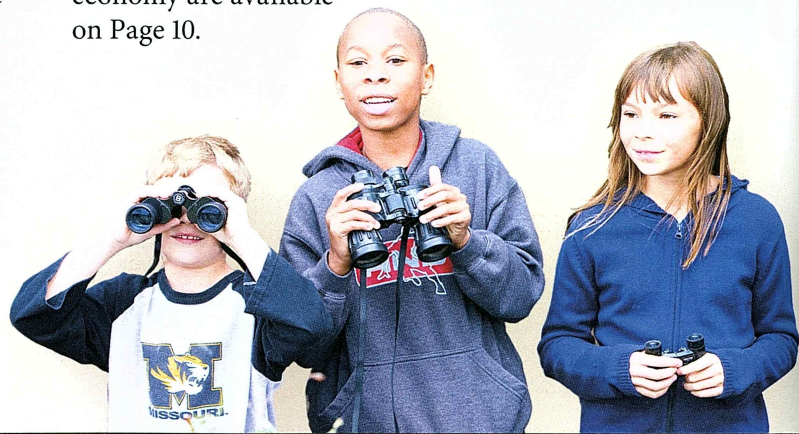
Conservation activities are managed and implemented by three sections within the department: resource management, engagement, and business. Staffing and programs are dedicated to managing natural resources, working with Missourians to deliver conservation, and ensuring opportunities are available

for all to enjoy Missouri's conservation heritage.

MDC's dedicated staff, working with volunteers and partner agencies, has made Missouri a national leader in fish, forest, and wildlife management.

Why This Matters

Whether feeding birds, watching wildlife, hiking, hunting, canoeing or boating, target shooting, fishing, or spending time at a nature center, Missourians are engaged with the outdoors. Healthy fish, forest, and wildlife resources result in better health for those who enjoy time outdoors. Studies show time outdoors results in improved memory, vision, concentration, and mental health, as well as reduced stress and inflammation. Missouri's outdoor resources also provide a significant boost to the health of the state's economy. Additional details on the effect of the outdoors on Missouri's economy are available on Page 10.





Missouri Conservation: Design for the Future

The Missouri Department of Conservation is proud to be considered one of the finest fish, forest, and wildlife agencies in the country. We have built that reputation on a foundation of strong support from Missourians, who continue to show overwhelmingly that our natural resources and the economic vitality they bring to our state are cherished and deserving of protection. For more than 85 years, the Department of Conservation, led by the dedication of the Missouri Conservation Commission and enabled by our talented staff, has ensured Missouri provides world-class outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

A history and reputation such as this does not sustain itself, especially in an ever-changing and challenging world. To maintain this level of service, an agency must continuously reassess and evaluate its goals and how it plans to meet those goals. For MDC, that process led to the development of the strategic plan, *Missouri Conservation: Design for the Future*, which was unveiled in 2018 and developed to guide MDC during FY19-23. *Missouri Conservation: Design for the Future* outlines three simple goals for MDC: take care of nature; connect people with nature; and maintain the

public trust. With an eye toward these three goals, MDC, with input from the public and conservation partners, has identified six desired outcomes, 16 strategies and more than 150 specific measurements that will help us track our progress.

When we began developing this plan, we asked ourselves some tough questions: Is there a better way to deliver conservation? How do we continue to provide a world-class level of service to Missourians and the outdoors in a constantly changing world with finite resources? How do we retain our active constituents – those hunters, anglers, and nature viewers who have been the backbone of Missouri's conservation efforts – while reaching out to younger generations and communities with limited exposure to the outdoors? In answering those questions, we developed a plan that puts us on track for the next 85 years to be as successful as our first 85.



Missouri Conservation: Design for the Future

FY19 -23 Strategic Plan



MDC TAKES CARE OF NATURE

Missouri has healthy land, water and forests	Implement the Missouri Comprehensive Conservation Strategy (CCS) to prioritize and tier our approach to water and land management	Prevent, where possible, and minimize the impacts of priority invasive species and diseases
	Maintain and improve the ecological functions of Missouri's watersheds and wetland systems; continue implementation of the Department's Wetland Plan	Promote ecosystem resiliency and adaptation to climate stressors through relevant Department operations, planning, research, and communications
Missouri has sustainable fish and wildlife	Manage, through sound science and public engagement, harvestable fish and wildlife species at biologically and socially acceptable levels	Recover and maintain priority species of conservation concern (SOCC) to sustainable levels and support the conservation of Missouri's full diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants
	Increase voluntary compliance with the Wildlife Code of Missouri through a community policing approach to resource law enforcement, science-based regulation development, public engagement, and public outreach	

MDC CONNECTS PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Missourians have places to go to enjoy nature	Use our Land Conservation Strategy (LCS) to focus future acquisitions, disposals, resource protection, and outdoor recreation opportunities	Expand opportunities for outdoor recreation activities on MDC and partner lands and facilities
	Implement a Community Conservation strategy	Implement a tiered approach to area maintenance and infrastructure development
	Develop, define, and maintain data management systems/processes to ensure we communicate accurate and consistent recreational and public use opportunities for area users	
Missourians value nature	Cultivate partnerships with individuals and organizations that build MDC's capacity to deliver conservation	Deliver efficient and effective nature-based educational programs and resource management workshops to diverse audiences
	Develop a statewide relevancy strategy to showcase the importance of nature in our economic vitality and quality of life, and increase support for conservation	

MDC MAINTAINS PUBLIC TRUST

Missourians are confident their investments are used wisely	Deliver high quality products and services through a focused customer experience to achieve lasting customer relationships	Advance organizational performance through measurement and data analysis
	Achieve strategic alignment through leadership and planning	Ensure efficient and effective business operations
Missouri is a recognized leader in conservation	Recruit, develop and retain a skilled workforce	Build a workforce that represents Missouri's demographics
	Support an inclusive work environment where all people are valued and respected	

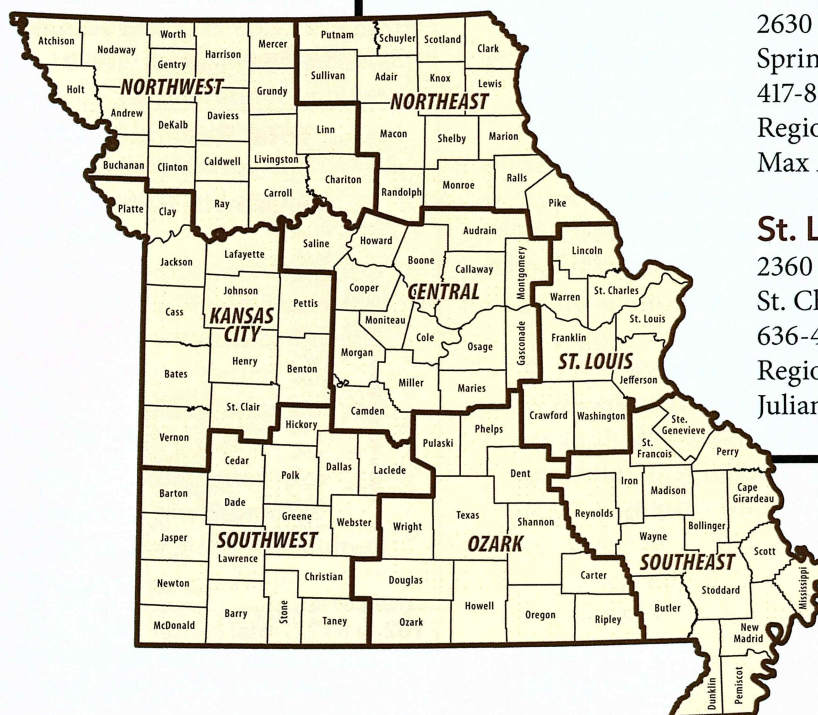


MDC – Restructured for the Future

In 2019, MDC began implementation of a new organizational model – defined as systems, structure, and culture – to best position us to accomplish our strategic plan. The new model focuses on six themes:

- ▶ Unified strategic priorities
- ▶ Integrated approach to natural resource management
- ▶ Regional empowerment and accountability
- ▶ Centralized standards guiding regional implementation
- ▶ Enhanced focus on continuous improvement
- ▶ Greater customer focus

A new organizational structure, adopted July 1, 2020, integrates the fisheries, forestry, and wildlife disciplines at both central office and the field level to reflect our tradition of innovation and leadership in natural resource management. A new regional administrator role is designed to enhance local decision-making and community partnerships in our eight regions. Other new focal areas in the structure include positions focused on the relevancy of conservation to broad audiences, recreational use, planning, citizen engagement, hunter/angler recruitment, wetland/aquatic systems, and customer experience.



MDC Regional Offices

MDC Headquarters

2901 W. Truman Blvd.
PO Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-751-4115

Central Region

3500 E. Gans Road
Columbia, MO 65201
573-815-7900
Regional Administrator:
Kevin Borisenko

Kansas City Region

12405 SE Ranson Road
Lee's Summit, MO 64082
816-622-0900
Regional Administrator:
Debra Burns

Northeast Region

3500 S. Baltimore
Kirksville, MO 63501
660-785-2420
Regional Administrator:
Daniel Hartwig

Northwest Region

701 James McCarthy Drive
St. Joseph, MO 64507
816-271-3100
Regional Administrator:
Bryan Gragg

Ozark Region

551 Joe Jones Blvd.
West Plains, MO 65775
417-256-7161
Regional Administrator:
Sarah Medlock

Southeast Region

2302 County Park Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
573-290-5730
Regional Administrator:
Matt Bowyer

Southwest Region

2630 N. Mayfair
Springfield, MO 65803
417-895-6880
Regional Administrator:
Max Alleger

St. Louis Region

2360 Highway D
St. Charles, MO 63304
636-441-4554
Regional Administrator:
Julianne Stone

Missouri Department of Conservation Revenue

State Budget/State General Revenue

MDC's budget represents **less than 1 percent** of the entire state budget. **No state general revenue is received.**

Revenues

Authorization requests from the Conservation Commission Fund are funded by anticipated revenue from the one-eighth of 1 percent **conservation sales tax** (62.4 percent), **hunting and fishing permits** (17.3 percent), and **federal management allotments** (14.9 percent). The commission cannot spend more than the combined revenues that make up the Conservation Commission Fund.

Actual receipts from sales tax have shown a steady increase over the last few years:

- ▶ FY22 sales tax increased 11.0 percent from FY21, or \$14.7 million.
- ▶ FY22 permit sales decreased 0.8 percent from FY21, or \$0.3 million.
- ▶ FY22 total revenue increased 8.8 percent from FY21, or \$19.3 million.
- ▶ FY22 inflation (Midwest CPI-U) growth from FY21 was 9.5 percent.
- ▶ FY23 total revenue is projected to grow 11.2 percent.

Fund Balance and Commitments

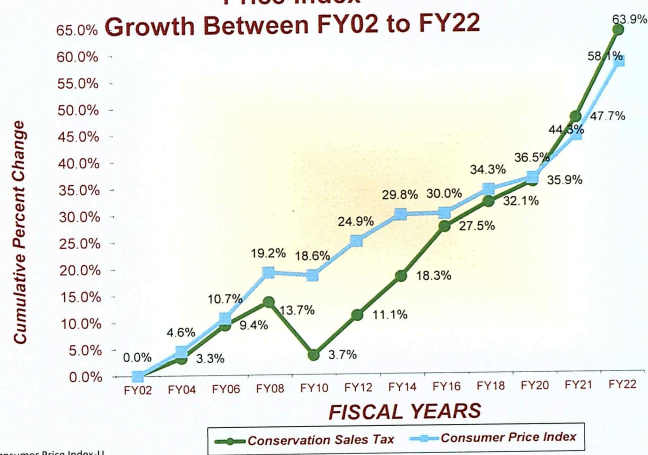
Similar to other funds (e.g. general revenue), MDC's fund balance is not spent down to zero, but rather is managed for fiscal soundness.

Generally, financial planners recommend three months of operating reserve for businesses and organizations similar to MDC. To account for economic uncertainty and extraordinary circumstances, MDC has adopted a fund reserve of at least 75 days of operating expenses.

Today's economic uncertainty requires a conservative approach to managing fund balances. Taking a conservative approach will keep MDC in a sound financial condition into the future to fulfill our constitutional obligation to Missouri citizens.

Conservation Sales Tax vs Consumer Price Index

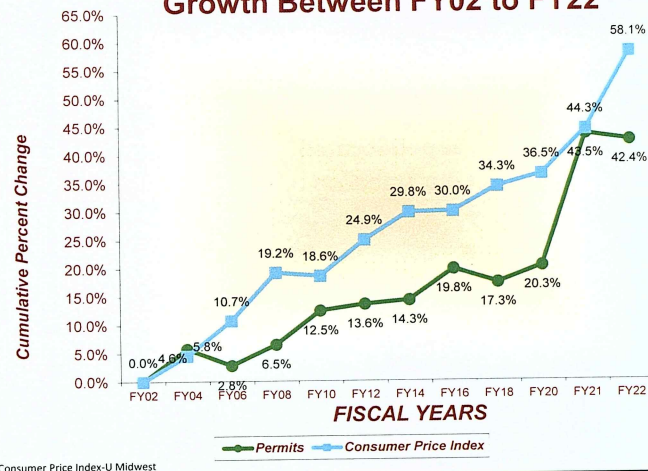
Growth Between FY02 to FY22



FY02 to FY22, conservation sales tax grew cumulatively 5.9% more than the rate of inflation equating to \$5.3 million.

Permits vs Consumer Price Index

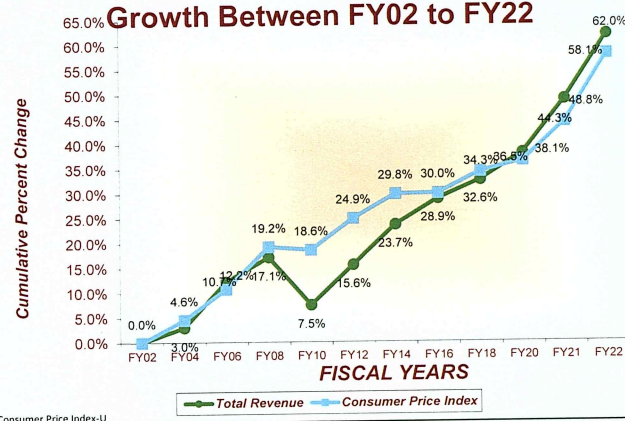
Growth Between FY02 to FY22



FY02 to FY22, permit sales grew cumulatively 15.6% less than the rate of inflation or \$4.5 million.

Total Revenue vs Consumer Price Index

Growth Between FY02 to FY22



FY02 to FY22, total conservation revenues grew cumulatively more than the rate of inflation by 3.9 percent or \$5.8 million.



85 percent of Missourians report that they are interested in Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife.

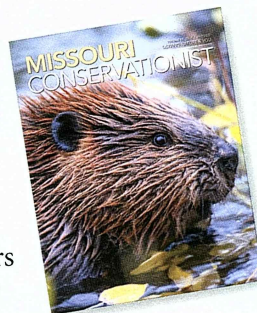
We Listen to Missourians

MDC believes that all Missouri citizens are important, and we want to earn their trust. Our job is to listen, understand, and personally deliver programs and services in a manner that benefits all Missourians and the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of Missouri.

- ▶ The Missouri Conservation Commission meets regularly, and anyone may contact the commission with comments or request to appear at a commission meeting. Commission composition, responsibilities, and contact information is available online at short.mdc.mo.gov/ZoA.
- ▶ MDC has conducted attitude, opinion, satisfaction, and participation surveys – via mail and telephone – for more than 30 years. Additionally, focus groups are held throughout the state to help determine Missourians' opinions and attitudes about MDC and conservation.
- ▶ *Wildlife Code of Missouri* regulations are formed and discussed in a public setting that invites citizen participation. The public can also make comments on proposed regulations through a variety of venues, including MDC's regulation comment page at short.mdc.mo.gov/Zjx.
- ▶ MDC seeks public input on conservation area management plans at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.
- ▶ MDC staff members answer questions and address concerns via AskMDC, a service accessible through telephone (573-522-4115, ext. 3848), online (short.mdc.mo.gov/Zpw), and email (AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov). The public can also

submit questions via social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter).

- ▶ MDC's website (mdc.mo.gov) is filled with conservation information, contact information, and online comment forms.
- ▶ MDC has eight regional service centers with staff available to assist Missourians with their conservation requests and needs. Regional service center locations and contact information are available on Page 5.
- ▶ *Missouri Conservationist*, MDC's free monthly magazine, includes a letter-to-the-editor section and publishes questions submitted via AskMDC.
- ▶ Since 2017, MDC has hosted the annual Missouri Conservation Partners Roundtable. The event brings together students and professionals from state and federal agencies, universities, and nongovernmental conservation organizations who have an interest in conserving our state's fish, forest, and wildlife resources, including connecting people to those important resources. The 2022 roundtable had over 300 participants.



How Regulations Are Set

Each year, MDC's Regulations Committee reviews the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* to ensure Missouri's forests, fish, and wildlife are protected. Changes to the *Code* can be proposed by either the public or MDC staff.

The committee researches the effects of the proposed regulation changes, including the costs to citizens and government agencies, and potential effects on wildlife populations. MDC solicits public input through several avenues, including public meetings and online comments.

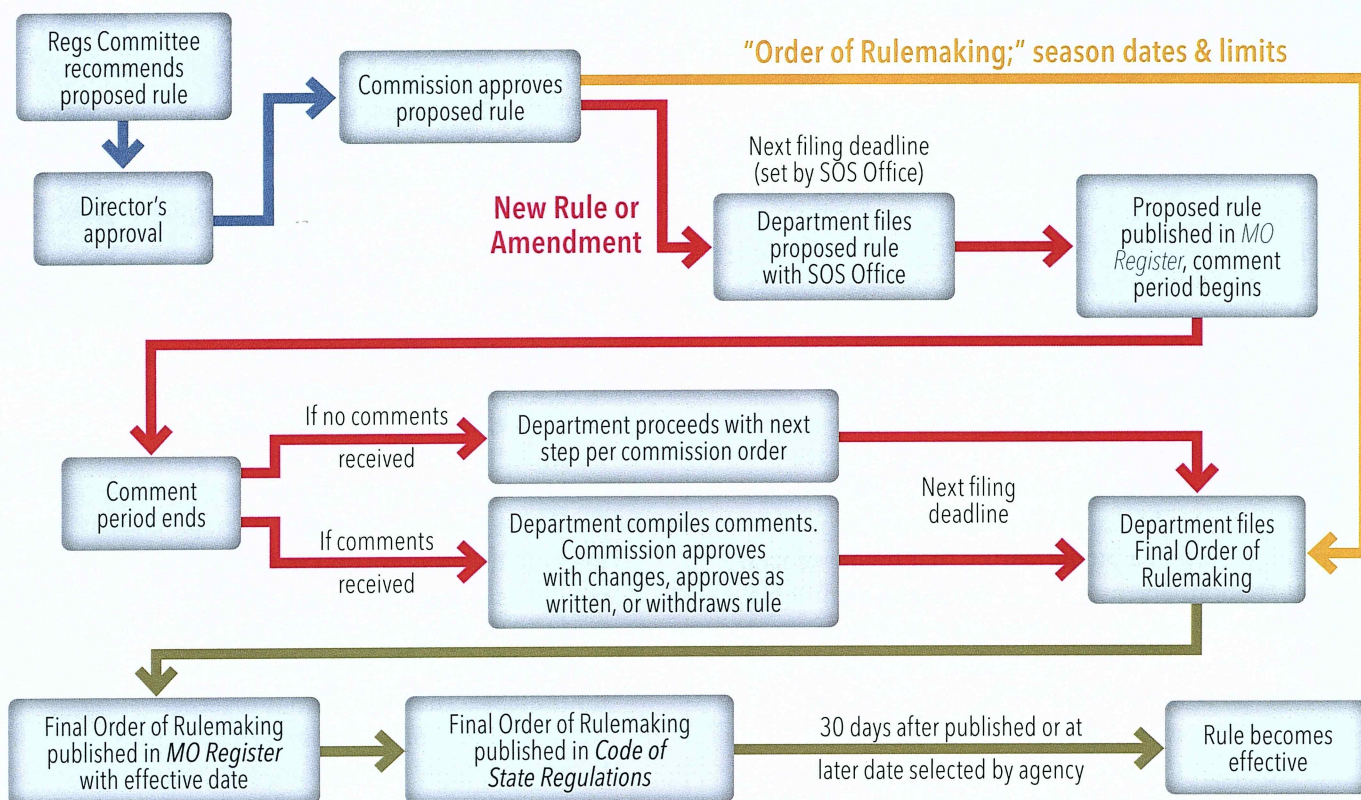
When research shows a change would improve a natural resource or provide more opportunities for Missourians to enjoy nature without detrimental effects to natural resources, a proposed regulation change is sent to MDC's director. If the director approves the change, the proposal is submitted to the Conservation Commission.

If passed by the commission, the proposed changes are filed with the secretary of state and published in the Missouri Register, which is available online at short.mdc.mo.gov/ZuZ.

Publication of proposed changes in the Missouri Register begins a 30-day public comment period. If no comments are received, the final regulation is filed and becomes effective on the date specified in the proposal or 30 days after publication in the Missouri Code of State Regulations. Proposed changes can be read and commented online at short.mdc.mo.gov/Z49.

When comments are received, the proposal is reviewed. Based on the public's comments and available research data, the commission may decide to withdraw, modify, or implement the regulation.

Rulemaking Process used by Missouri Department of Conservation



- ▶ All new rules, amendments, and rescissions must go through the entire rulemaking process. Minimum time to become effective = 90 days.
- ▶ Season dates & limits or rules "incorporated by reference" are filed as Orders of Rulemaking and do not have a 30-day comment period. Minimum time to become effective = 10 days.

What Missourians Say About Conservation

MDC believes that all Missouri citizens are important, and we want to earn their trust. Our job is to listen, understand, and personally deliver programs and services in a manner that benefits all Missourians and the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of Missouri.



Most Missourians (86 percent) say they are either very **familiar** or somewhat familiar with MDC.

Most Missourians (85 percent) report they are interested in **Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife.**

Most Missourians (71 percent) agree that **land should be acquired** for fish, forest, and wildlife conservation.



Most Missourians (92 percent) agree "It is important for **outdoor places** to be **protected** even if you don't plan to visit the area."

Most Missourians (84 percent) approve of **hunting for food**, yet only 28 percent approve of hunting for an exceptional animal.



Most Missourians (88 percent) approve of cutting down trees to **improve forest health** and condition; yet only 43 percent approve of cutting down trees to make lumber, furniture, or other wood products.



The majority of Missourians (52 percent) agree that **trapping is okay** as long as it is regulated.

Time is mentioned as the biggest obstacle to the enjoyment of outdoor activities by Missourians.

A majority of Missourians (60 percent) agree MDC is doing a good job of **enforcing fish and wildlife laws.**

Most Missourians (76 percent) agree MDC **"is a name I can trust."**



INFORMATION FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, 2013 AND 2022.

Most Missourians (77 percent) agree MDC **should help private landowners** who want to restore native communities of plants and animals.



More than three-quarters (77 percent) agree MDC **"should assist communities"** that want to include trees and green spaces in housing, business, and shopping developments."





The Economics of Conservation in Missouri

The amount of state sales tax revenue generated from fish, forest, and wildlife recreation spending is about the same amount as sales tax revenue received by the Department of Conservation from the one-eighth of 1 percent conservation sales tax – **conservation pays its way in Missouri.**

- ▶ In Missouri, the **total economic impact** of fish and wildlife recreation and the forest products industry is more than **\$15 billion dollars annually**.
- ▶ Expenditures and retail sales from fish and wildlife recreation and forest products **support over 102,000 jobs**.
- ▶ Since 1980, the department has **paid over \$23 million to Missouri counties** in lieu of taxes. In fiscal year 2022, Missouri counties received \$1.1 million in forest cropland payments, levee and drainage district payments, and in-lieu-of-property-tax payments.
- ▶ The **forestry and wood products industry** in Missouri **supports 37,329 jobs** and has an **economic impact of more than \$9 billion**.
- ▶ **Missourians and nonresidents spend more than \$2.6 billion annually on fish and wildlife recreation**, which generates an economic impact of \$5 billion.
- ▶ **Fish, forest, and wildlife expenditures generate more than \$507 million annually** in state and local tax revenue.
- ▶ In Missouri, **2.5 million residents and nonresidents** age 16 years and older **participate in fishing, hunting, or wildlife-related recreation** each year.
- ▶ Collectively, **resident anglers spend 13.3 million days afield, while resident hunters spend 9.2 million days, and resident wildlife-watchers spend 7.8 million days** in away-from-home activities. Nonresident anglers add 1.6 million days and nonresident hunters 932,000 days.
- ▶ **Nonresident expenditures for fishing and hunting** in Missouri **exceed \$346 million** each year. Each nonresident angler and hunter spends an average of \$547 each year in Missouri.
- ▶ **Deer hunters** in Missouri, age 16 years and older, **spend \$615 million each year**.
- ▶ Deer hunting in Missouri generates more than \$1 billion of business activity annually. This results in \$95 million in state and local tax revenue each year.
- ▶ Deer hunting expenditures annually support more than 13,000 jobs in Missouri.

INFORMATION FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND THE 2011 NATIONAL SURVEY OF FISHING, HUNTING, AND WILDLIFE-ASSOCIATED RECREATION.

Conservation pays its way in Missouri.



Missouri Hunting and Fishing

Hunters	576,000
Anglers	1 million
Total Expenditures	\$1.7 billion
Total Jobs Supported	39,991
Earnings from Expenditures	\$1.1 million
State and Local Tax Revenues	\$274 million
Economic Impact	\$3 billion

State Tax Revenue Information

Hunters and anglers in Missouri generate **\$274 million** annually in state and local taxes.

The amount of sales tax revenue generated by fish, forest, and wildlife recreation is more than the amount of sales tax received by MDC from the one-eighth of 1 percent sales tax.

Take a Closer Look

- ▶ **One of every four** Missouri residents hunts or fishes.
- ▶ Annual spending by hunters and anglers is more than the value of sales for cattle production in Missouri.

Jobs

Hunters and anglers support **39,991 jobs** each year.

INFORMATION FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE NATIONAL SURVEY OF FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE-ASSOCIATED RECREATION.

The amount of sales tax revenue generated by fish, forest, and wildlife recreation is more than the amount of sales tax received by the Department of Conservation from the one-eighth of 1 percent sales tax.

Missouri Wildlife Recreation

Wildlife Watchers	1.7 million
Total Expenditures	\$940 million
Total Jobs Supported	25,509
Earnings from Expenditures	\$629 million
State and Local Tax Revenues	\$153 million
Economic Impact	\$1.7 billion

State Tax Revenue Information

- ▶ Wildlife watchers in Missouri generate **\$153 million** annually in state and local taxes.
- ▶ The amount of sales tax revenue generated by fish, forest, and wildlife recreation is more than the amount of sales tax received by MDC from the one-eighth of 1 percent sales tax.

Take a Closer Look

- ▶ In Missouri, adults involved in wildlife watching would fill Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City more than 22 times.
- ▶ Missourians are outdoor oriented — each year they spend 7.8 million days in wildlife-watching activities away from their homes. More than **1.5 million** enjoy observing, feeding, and photographing wildlife near their homes.

Jobs

Wildlife-watching activities support **25,509 jobs** in Missouri each year.

INFORMATION FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE NATIONAL SURVEY OF FISHING, HUNTING AND WILDLIFE-ASSOCIATED RECREATION





Missouri Forestry and Wood Products

Total Forested Acres	14 million
Privately Owned Acres	83 percent
Publicly Owned Acres	17 percent
Total Jobs Supported	37,329
Wood-Using Industry	
Labor Income	\$2.6 billion
Economic Impact	\$9.5 billion

State Tax Revenue

Forestry and the wood-using industries in Missouri generate **\$78 million each year in state sales tax**.

Take a Closer Look

- ▶ About **3 million tree seedlings** are produced annually in the state nursery.
- ▶ More than a million acres of forests have been added to Missouri's landscape in the last 30 years.
- ▶ Forests in Missouri are increasing faster than they are being harvested.
- ▶ Most of the forests in Missouri are privately owned.
- ▶ Forests are important to Missourians who enjoy outdoor recreation such as camping, sightseeing, birdwatching, canoeing, nature photography, hunting, or fishing. Many MDC areas have campsites or are open for primitive camping.
- ▶ Forests in Missouri are essential for healthy streams, clean water, wildlife habitat, and environmental stability.

Jobs

Wood industry firms and activities support more than **37,000 jobs** each year.

INFORMATION FROM THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION.



Use, Enjoy, and Learn

Discover Nature

For many Missourians, enjoying nature — through hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, boating, or just viewing — has been passed down from one generation to another. However, for many others, that tradition does not exist. It is for this segment of the population that MDC has developed the Discover Nature series. An outreach program, Discover Nature provides easy access to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife to populations currently missing out.

Discover Nature Schools

One of the best ways for students to learn about nature is to interact with the outdoors. That's why MDC worked with teachers and education consultants to create a statewide conservation education program called Discover Nature Schools (DNS). **Nearly 1,000 (952 schools, or 31.3 percent of Missouri's registered schools)** have adopted at least one unit, and **over 1,352 classrooms** are using DNS curriculum.

DNS emphasizes hands-on learning, teaches problem-solving, and provides authentic and local contexts for learning. DNS teaches students from pre-K through high school about Missouri's native plants, animals, and habitats and connects them with nature.

Not only does DNS meet the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education state standards and grade level expectations, there are also big benefits for students. A recent study of the program shows that DNS increased the amount of time students spent in activities and field experiences outside the classroom. Learning outdoors improves student physical and mental health, increases scores on standardized tests, and reduces attention-deficit problems.

In addition to providing curriculum support to schools throughout the state, MDC has also partnered with Columbia Public Schools to establish the Boone County



Nature School. To be located on 111 acres adjacent to Three Creeks Conservation Area, the school will provide place-based outdoor learning to fifth-grade students throughout the county, as well as serve as a field trip destination for students of all ages. When not in use by students, the facility will provide a location for teacher training, public conservation education, professional development, and outdoor skills programs.

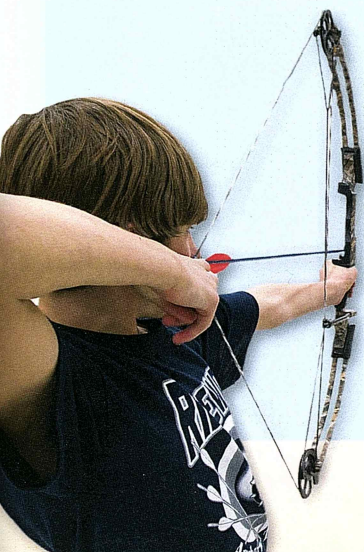


Missouri National Archery in the Schools Program (MoNASP)

Nearly everyone — regardless of age, size or physical ability — can succeed at archery. Kids love archery, and archery helps kids learn important life skills like following directions and listening. Statistics show multiple student benefits from school archery programs:

- ▶ Improved school attendance
- ▶ Increased confidence
- ▶ Improved behavior
- ▶ Increased physical activity

Missouri National Archery in the Schools Program (MoNASP), coordinated through MDC, continues to help students grow and thrive. With **over 900 participating schools, thousands of students** in grades 4 through 12 are getting the opportunity to learn the lifetime sport of archery as part of their school curriculum.

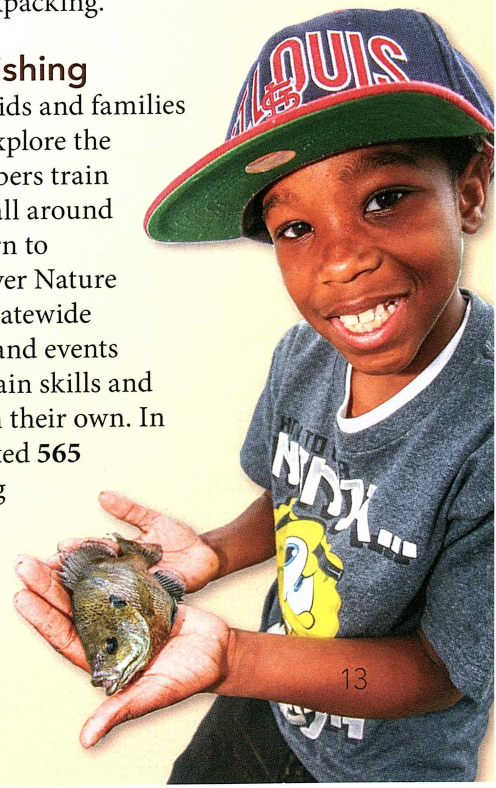


Discover Nature – Women

MDC has also increased its outreach to women through Discover Nature — Women. Women 14 years and older can gain the skills and confidence to pursue outdoor activities alone or with friends and family. Regional Discover Nature — Women events occur throughout the year, offering women local workshops almost any time. Many of these events are hunts that include in-depth clinics addressing wildlife biology, regulations, safe firearm use, hunting strategies, and the cleaning and care of harvested game. Other events range from jewelry making to hiking and backpacking.

Discover Nature – Fishing

Fishing is a great way for kids and families to have fun together and explore the outdoors. MDC staff members train experienced anglers from all around the state to help others learn to fish through its free Discover Nature — Fishing program. The statewide program provides lessons and events to help kids and families gain skills and confidence to go fishing on their own. In **FY22 the Department hosted 565 fishing programs** reaching **22,376 people**.





The Health Benefits of Conservation and the Outdoors

Much of what MDC does relates to what people do for nature, but increasing emphasis is being placed on what nature can do for people. An increasing number of studies link time spent in the outdoors with improvements in physical and mental health.

In addition to simply beating cabin fever, spending time outdoors has additional benefits, according to Harvard Medical School:

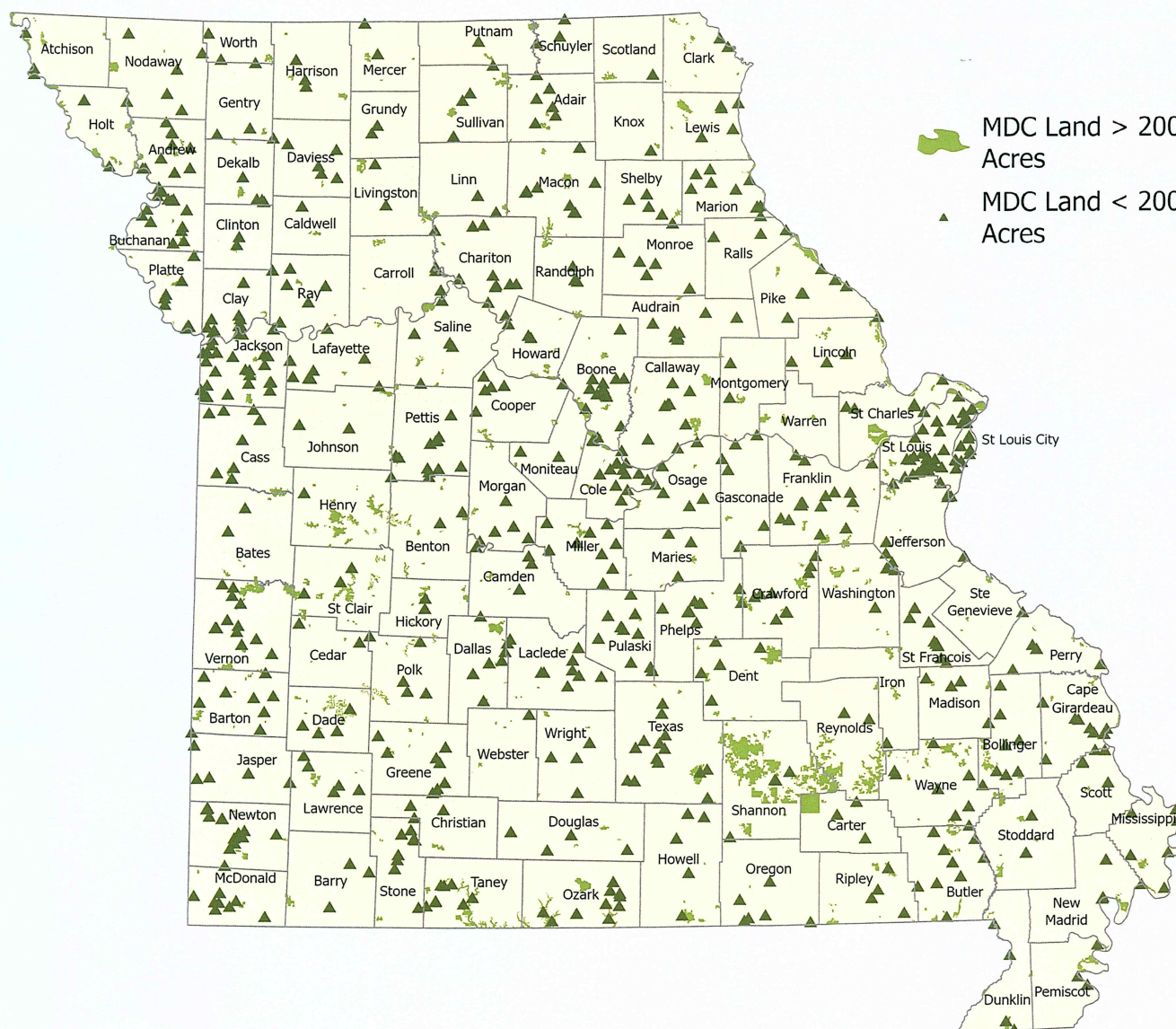
- ▶ Increased Vitamin D — Being outdoors in the sun kick-starts the process that creates Vitamin D, which studies suggest strengthens the body's immune system and can help fight against everything from osteoporosis to cancer to depression to heart attacks and stroke.
- ▶ Increased exercise — Outdoor pursuits, including hiking, canoeing or kayaking, bicycling, nature watching, and more, are active by nature, especially compared to the most common, typically sedentary, indoor activities.
- ▶ Increased happiness — Exposure to natural light (e.g. sunshine) has been shown to improve people's mood. Physical activity has been shown to relax and cheer people up, especially when replacing inactivity. Other studies have suggested that outdoor exercise has been shown to improve both self-esteem and mood.
- ▶ In recognition of the link between environmental, animal, and human health, the Department of Conservation is joining forces with the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Senior Services, Natural Resources, and Public Safety to construct a new collaborative laboratory. This multi-agency lab will bring a 'One Health' approach to disease and environmental testing in Missouri and will create a unique campus of laboratory science functioning together in state-of-the-art facilities linked together to deliver quality, comprehensive and rapid laboratory services for current and future health/environmental threats to Missourians.
- ▶ Improved concentration — Several studies of children diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder have found that children with ADHD score higher on tests of concentration after a walk through a park or other outdoor setting.
- ▶ Improved healing — One study reported that spinal surgery patients experienced less pain and stress, and took fewer pain medications during their recoveries if they were exposed to natural light, as one would be when outdoors.



Missouri Department of Conservation Areas

- ▶ MDC administers more than 1 million acres throughout the state. At the end of FY2022, the Conservation Commission owned 815,234 acres and managed over 204,167 acres leased from other conservation partners.
- ▶ MDC conducts more than 200,000 acres of habitat management on conservation areas each year, with an emphasis on natural community, waterfowl, dove, and early successional habitat management.
- ▶ In addition to areas owned or managed by MDC, Missourians have access to 54 additional properties totaling 14,937.9 acres through the Missouri Outdoor Recreational Access Program (MRAP). Under MRAP, MDC provides annual incentive payments and habitat management financial assistance to private landowners who open their land for public recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

Most Missourians
are within a
30-minute drive of
a conservation area.



Missouri Department of Conservation Management Areas

MDC's land acquisition focus is on areas that represent reasonable additions to existing holdings, contribute to public access of rivers and streams, or contain an important habitat type deserving of protection.

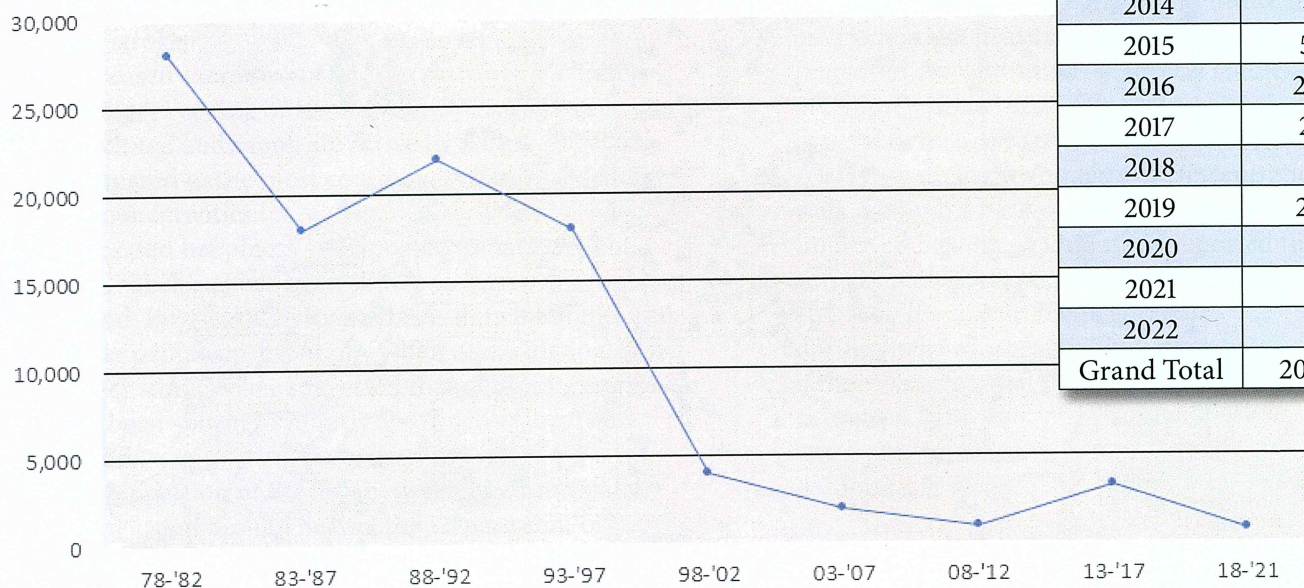
Before land can be purchased, it must be for sale, and every acre of MDC land was purchased from a willing seller exercising his or her inherent right to dispose of property. Since FY2012, MDC has purchased 20,822 acres. Missourians have generously donated land (approximately 5.5 percent of the MDC's public land holdings) to MDC for habitat management, natural community restoration, and public recreation.

A promise made to voters in 1976 was to increase the amount of land for public hunting, fishing access, nature enjoyment, and to preserve natural areas. A recent statewide survey conducted by an outside

group found that 92 percent of all Missourians agree that outdoor places should be protected, even if they don't plan to visit the area. Although MDC holds less than 2 percent of Missouri's total acres in public trust, most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of a conservation area.

92 percent of all Missourians agree that outdoor places should be protected.

Average Acres Purchased Since 1978

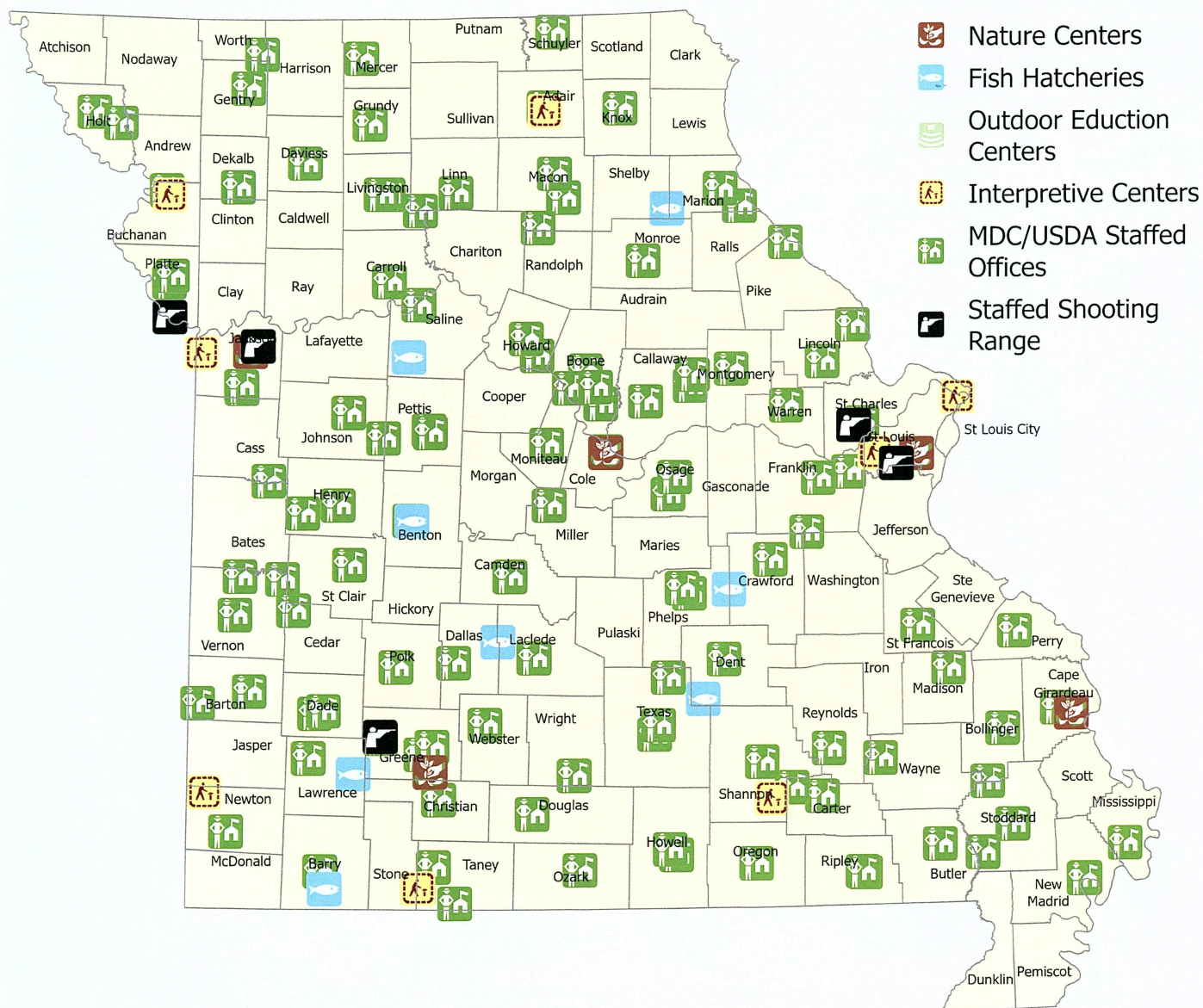


Fiscal Year	Total Acres Purchased
2012	768.21
2013	2,336.26
2014	4,417.31
2015	5,559.71
2016	2,232.87
2017	2,141.36
2018	236.3
2019	2,012.34
2020	878.02
2021	240.3
2022	0
Grand Total	20,822.68

Missouri Department of Conservation Specialized Sites

In addition to the over 1 million acres of MDC-owned or -managed sites available to the public throughout the state, MDC operates several specialized sites open to the public, including nature centers, outdoor education centers, staffed shooting ranges, interpretive centers, and fish hatcheries.

Each year approximately
1 in 12 Missourians visit an
MDC nature, education,
or interpretive center.



Number of Hunting and Fishing Permits Purchased by County for Permit Year 2021

Fishing Permits

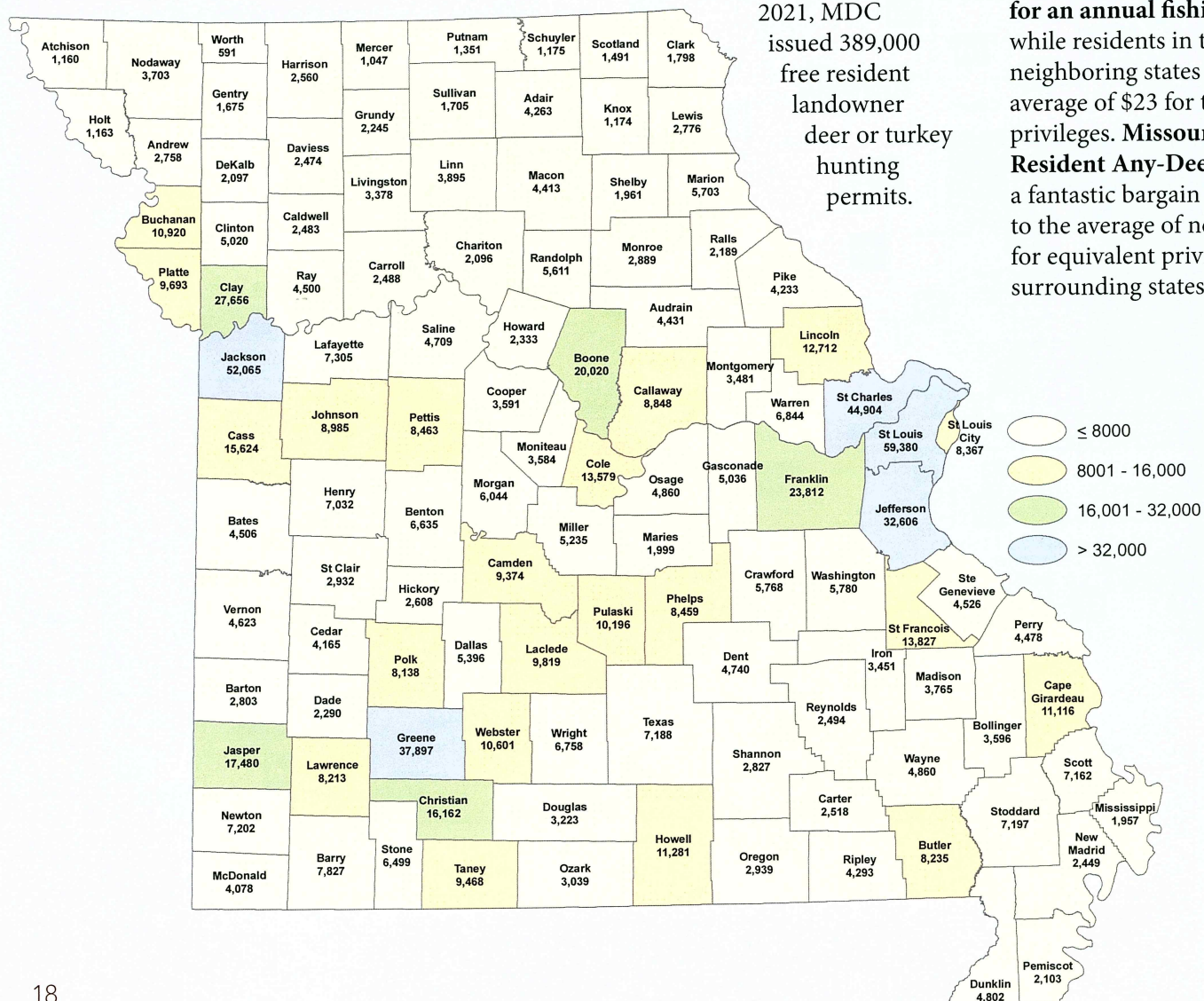
- ▶ Missouri is home to over **1 million anglers**. Fishing recreation contributes \$1.2 billion of economic impact to the Missouri economy, supports over 15,000 jobs, and generates over \$110 million in state and local sales tax per year.
- ▶ Missouri offers **world-class trout fishing** at four trout parks, 120 miles of spring-fed, cold-water trout streams, Lake Taneycomo, and winter trout areas in nine cities. Nearly **2 million trout**, produced by MDC hatcheries and the Neosho National Fish Hatchery, are stocked each year.

Deer and Turkey Permits

- ▶ Missouri offers some of the finest deer and turkey hunting in the nation. However, this wasn't always the case. In 1925 Missouri's deer herd was estimated at 500 animals, and in the 1950s the state had only 2,500 turkeys. With the help and dedication of conservation-minded landowners, citizens, and organizations, Missouri now has about 322,000 turkeys and over 1 million deer.
- ▶ The *Wildlife Code of Missouri* has a number of permit privileges for landowners, youth, those over 65, members of the military, and those with disabilities. In 2021, MDC issued 389,000 free resident landowner deer or turkey hunting permits.

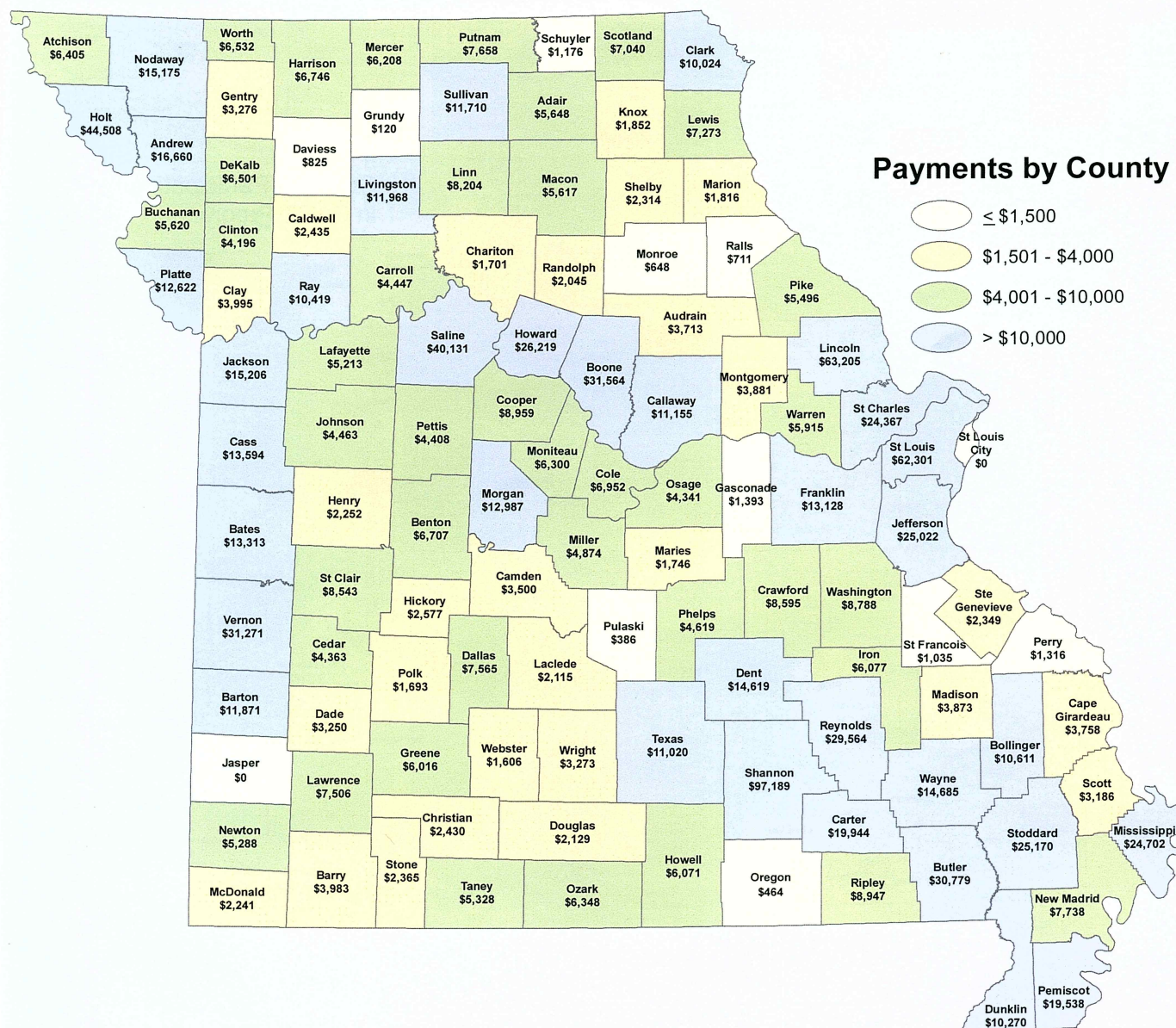
Small-Game Hunting Permits

- ▶ Missouri leads the nation in reducing obstacles for youth and adults to participate in hunting and fishing. This success is largely due to citizen interest in conservation, youth-only seasons, low-cost permits, and MDC-sponsored hunting and education programs.
- ▶ **Low permit cost** is one more reason Missouri is a great place to hunt and fish. Missouri residents pay **\$12 for an annual fishing permit** while residents in the eight neighboring states pay an average of \$23 for the same privileges. Missouri's **\$17 Resident Any-Deer Permit** is a fantastic bargain compared to the average of nearly \$54 for equivalent privileges in surrounding states.



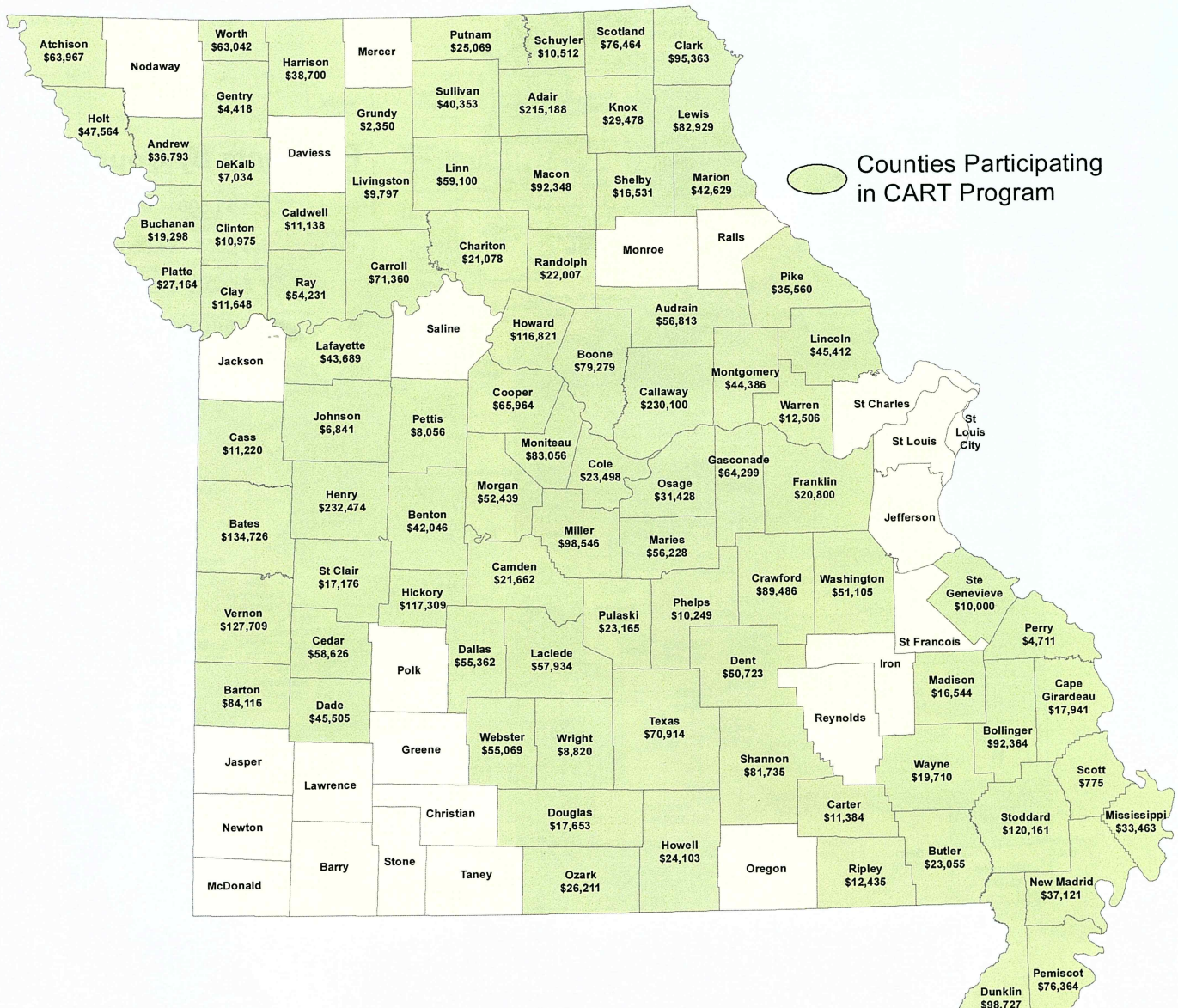
Total Payments to Counties in Lieu of Taxes, Forest Cropland Payments, and Levee and Drainage District Payments from the Conservation Sales Tax for Fiscal Year 2022

- ▶ In 1980 the voters of Missouri authorized revenue from the one-eighth of 1 percent conservation sales tax to be used by the Conservation Commission to make payments to counties for: (1) the unimproved value of land acquired after July 1, 1977, in lieu of property taxes, and (2) land classified as forest cropland under the State Forestry Law.
- ▶ County payments made under the in-lieu-of-tax program are based upon the higher of: (1) taxes paid on a tract of land at the time of the acquisition by the Conservation Commission, or (2) a calculated rate modeled after the State Tax Commission rule for valuing agricultural lands.
- ▶ County payments made under the forest cropland program are based upon the State Forestry Law.



County Aid Road Trust (CART) Program Participation Totals for Fiscal Years 2020-2022

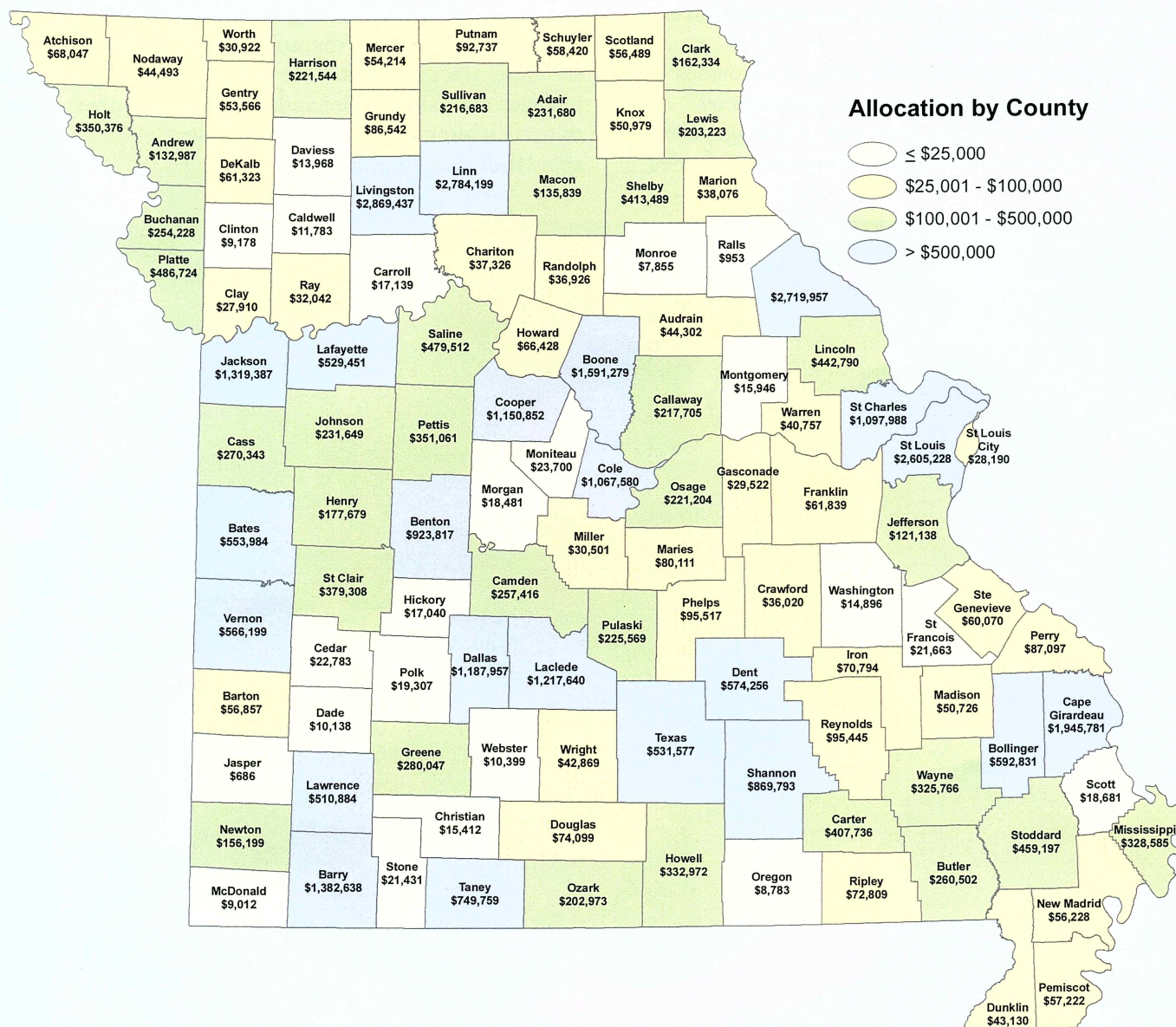
- ▶ Established in 1983, this program **allows for cost share** (usually 50 percent, with a county's match being in-kind services) of **roadway maintenance with counties** and other neighboring landowners. The focus of the program is to help ensure area roads are properly maintained and the public has adequate access to conservation areas.
- ▶ MDC's promise to serve the public extends beyond our goal to provide exceptional public service. The past few years, department staff have responded to catastrophes within and outside Missouri. Examples include floods, tornadoes, ice storms, wildfires, and hurricanes. Department employees provide a variety of services using their expertise with heavy equipment, boats, law enforcement, chainsaws, and water rescue.



Funds Allocated to Capital Improvement Projects by County for Fiscal Years 2020-2022

- ▶ MDC continues to connect with citizens through nature and improve forests, fish, and wildlife through major construction projects that enhance public service, fish production, wetland restoration, wildlife habitat, fishing access, streambank restoration, shooting ranges, regional offices, multi-use trails, and educational opportunities.

- ▶ Totals do not include an additional \$14.7 million spent on projects not tied directly to a county. These projects include, but are not limited to:
 - County Aid Road Trust program
 - Surveys and testing
 - Cultural resource surveys
 - Minor conservation area maintenance



Commitment to Communities

MDC's commitment to communities extends beyond the maintenance of conservation areas, shooting ranges, and conservation nature centers. MDC assists communities in bringing nature to neighborhoods through community conservation.

Community conservation is the practice of integrating nature into a town's or city's landscape. MDC staff can help communities determine the best way to bring nature home. Such improvements have been shown to increase social connections; decrease obesity; improve air quality; and stimulate local economies.

For municipal staff, MDC offers financial and technical assistance, training, education, and recognition. MDC also offers residents guidance for tree planting and care, tips for attracting wildlife, and information on landscaping with native plants.

MDC's Community Assistance Program provides public fishing access to rivers, streams, and lakes by working with cities, counties, state and federal agencies, businesses, foundations, and schools to provide fisheries

management and to cooperatively develop and maintain facilities for anglers and boaters.

MDC provides fisheries management at existing lakes and ponds, and cooperatively develops and maintains facilities (e.g., boat ramps, parking lots) for anglers and boaters at lake and stream areas. MDC has 113 partners for cooperative management of a range of facilities:

- ▶ 180 lakes
- ▶ 30 stream accesses
- ▶ Two lake accesses
- ▶ Eight aquatic education ponds

In addition, MDC maintains more than 300 boat ramps on conservation areas that provide anglers and boaters a convenient way to access Missouri streams and lakes.

MDC also makes fishing more accessible through the Rod and Reel Loaner Program, which is available in 172 locations across the state. The program allows individuals to check out fishing poles and tackle boxes for free. A list of participating sites is available online:

short.mdc.mo.gov/ZJq

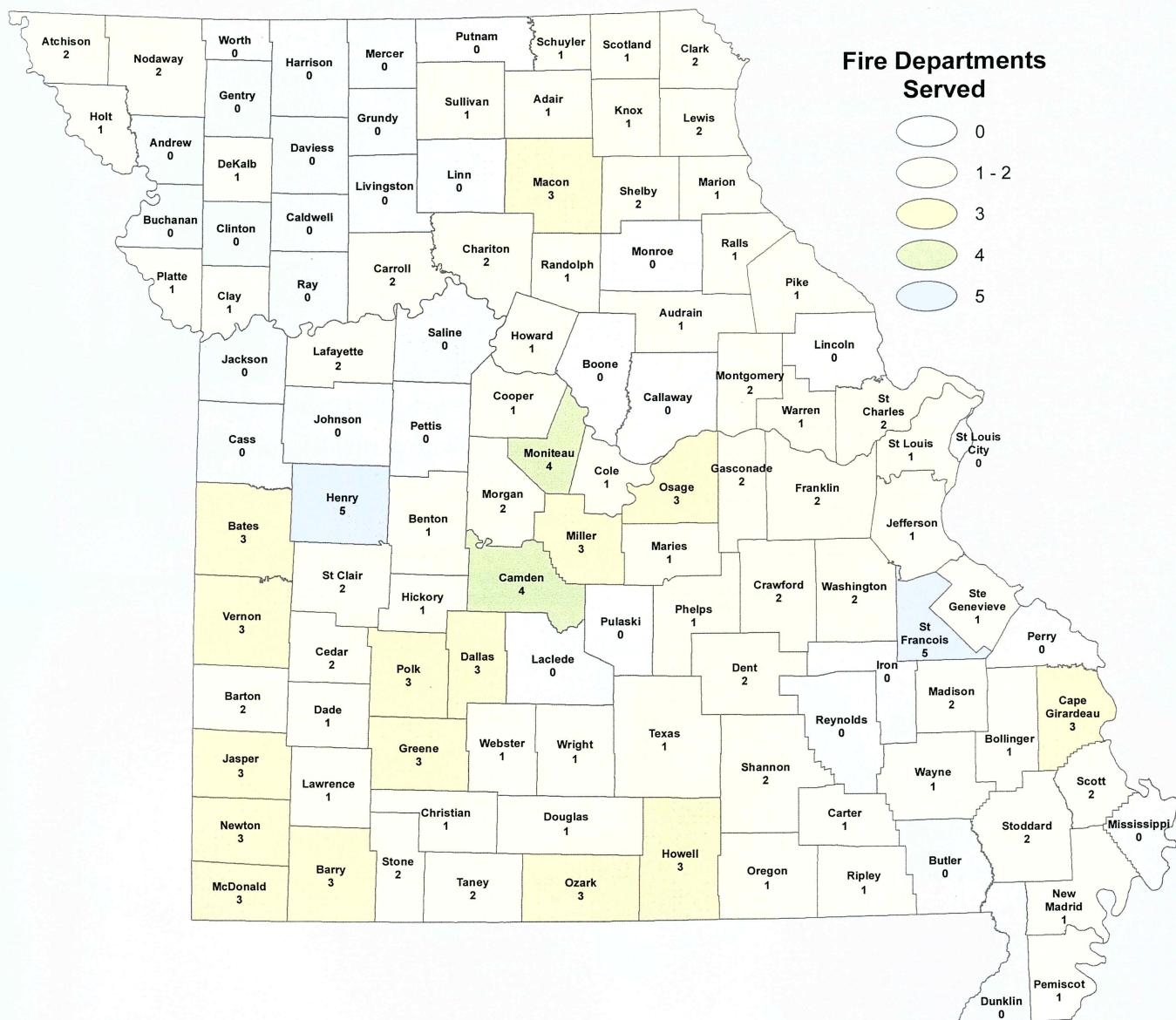


Fire Departments Served by County for Fiscal Year 2022

- ▶ MDC has statutory responsibility for wildfire suppression in the state and **works closely with more than 800 local fire departments** to offer training, provide federal excess property, grants for equipment, and promote wildfire prevention activities.
- ▶ MDC administers the Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) as well as the Fire Fighter Property (FFP) Program, which provide rural fire departments with firefighting and emergency equipment such as fire trucks, generators, pumps, and wildfire related equipment.
- ▶ FFP delivers \$4 million to \$5 million worth of equipment to fire departments annually, with \$4 million worth of equipment being assigned in FY2022.

The current assigned inventory through both programs is over \$115 million. Due to the higher quality of equipment acquired, the FFP Program is slowly replacing FEPP.

- ▶ MDC also administers the 50/50 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program. With funds averaging \$380,000 annually, provided by the USDA Forest Service and the department, this program compliments FEPP by providing local fire departments with grant funding to purchase wildland fire suppression and safety equipment, and emergency response equipment needed to ensure safe and effective firefighting.



Addressing Threats: Chronic Wasting Disease and Feral Hogs

Protecting Missouri's White-Tailed Deer Herd

As difficult as it might be to imagine, in 1925, only about 500 deer remained in Missouri. MDC, under the guidance of the Missouri Conservation Commission and working with citizen conservationists and landowners, has restored the herd. Today, deer hunting in Missouri generates more than \$1 billion of business activity annually, resulting in \$95 million in state and local tax revenue and supporting more than 13,000 jobs in Missouri.

Despite this success story, Missouri's deer herd is at risk. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) threatens the sustainability of Missouri's approximately 1.5 million white-tailed deer. Since the detection of the disease in captive deer in the state in 2010 — and free-ranging deer in 2012 — slowing the spread of CWD has remained an agency priority.

Since MDC began routine CWD surveillance in 2002, over 210,000 deer have been tested, including an average of about 27,000 annually since 2016. Of these, 292 have been CWD-positive.

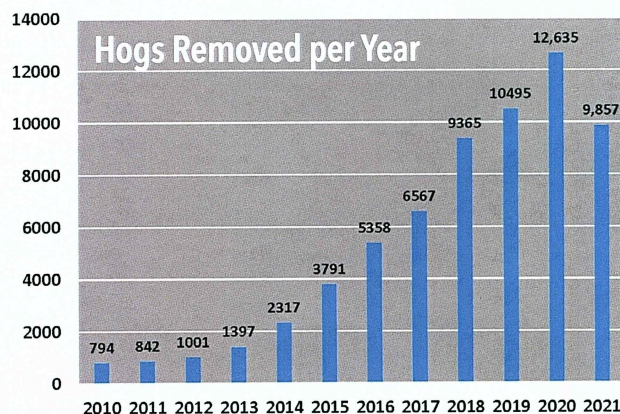
Through sampling, management, and surveillance, we know the vast majority of deer in Missouri remain CWD free. CWD has been detected in free-ranging deer in 22 counties since 2012, but the percentage of CWD-positive deer in these counties remains low. Of the 18 counties with CWD detections during the 2021-2022 season, the average overall percent of CWD-positive deer was less than 1 percent.

Eliminating Destructive, Dangerous Feral Hogs

While chronic wasting disease threatens Missouri's deer herd, feral hogs threaten much more: sensitive habitats, water quality, native wildlife, crops, and livestock.

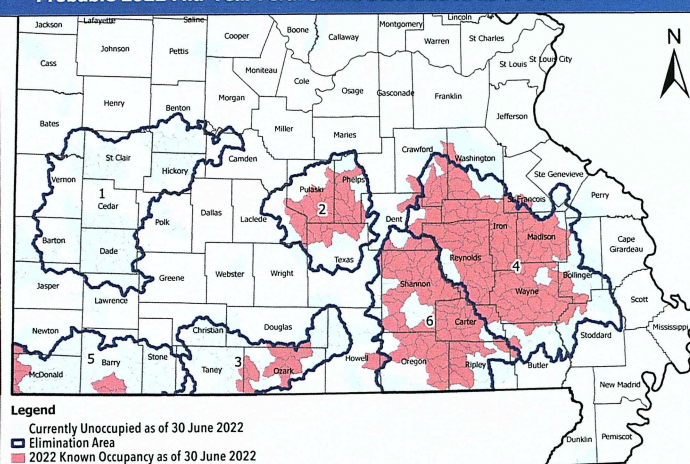
In 2015 MDC — working with 12 government agencies and more than 30 agriculture and outdoor groups — created the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership with the goal of trapping and eliminating feral hogs in Missouri. Partnership staff help hundreds of landowners across the state each year with feral hog elimination.

Concentrated partnership efforts have made significant progress in reducing the presence of feral hogs. Calendar year 2021 saw the first reduction in the number of feral hogs removed.



The presence of feral hogs are tracked by watersheds. Since 2016, partnership trappers have successfully eliminated feral hogs from nearly 75 percent of the watersheds that were previously occupied.

Probable 2022 Mid-Year Feral Swine Distribution as of 30 June 2022



These data, and all the information contained therein, have been collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), or by its cooperators on APHIS' behalf, for restricted government purposes only and is the sole property of APHIS. See full disclaimer: www.aphis.usda.gov/help/map-disclaimer.



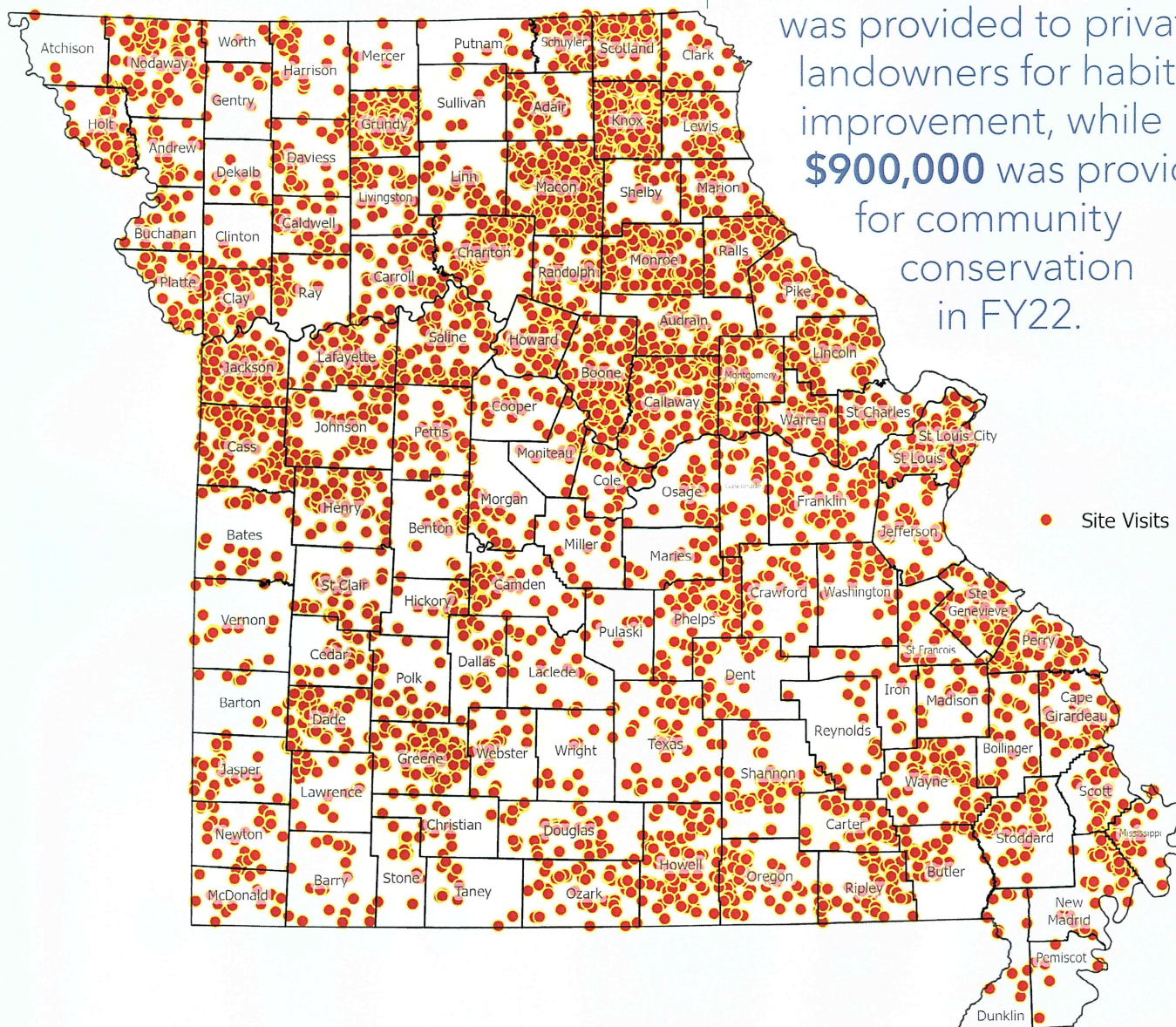
MDC Community and Private Land Conservation Site Visits for Fiscal Year 2022

Community and Private Land Services

- ▶ Over 90 percent of Missouri is privately owned. MDC works with landowners to help them achieve their land use objectives.
- ▶ 95 percent of landowners surveyed said they were satisfied with the initial service MDC provided, up from 93 percent in 2015.
- ▶ 98 percent believed the MDC-recommended practice(s) helped or will help them meet their land management objectives.
- ▶ 97 percent would recommend assistance from MDC private lands conservationists to other landowners, family, or friends.

More than **27,058** Missourians receive technical and financial support to manage their land for the benefit of fish, forests, or wildlife.

Approximately **\$2 million** was provided to private landowners for habitat improvement, while **\$900,000** was provided for community conservation in FY22.





Go mobile with MDC apps

MO Hunting

Purchase, view, and store permits. Plus, notch your permit and Telecheck your deer and turkey harvest. Access basic statewide regulations and season information.

MO Fishing

Purchase, view, and store permits. Access fishing regulations, species information, and maps of MDC public boat ramps, underwater fish structures, and more.

MO Outdoors

Users can quickly and easily find outdoor activities close to home, work, or even while traveling.

MO Con Mag

Keep up to date on happenings with fish, forest, and wildlife in Missouri. View articles, wildlife photography, videos, and more.

MDC Online

MDC continues to work on creative ways to keep in touch with all Missourians. You can get news through our free monthly magazines, including the *Missouri Conservationist* and our kids' magazine, *Xplor*, or sign up on our website to get key conservation topics delivered directly to your email. If you live by smartphone communication, you can also get our texts, follow us on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube), or check out our mobile-friendly website.

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